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Report to the Parks & Recreation Committee - Annual Conference Canadian Parks & Recreation Association.

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REPORT TO

THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

BY

ALDERMAN BRIAN HINKLEY

ON HIS ATTENDANCE AT

THE 1983 ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF

THE CANADIAN PARKS AND RECREATION ASSOCIATION

HELD ON AUGUST 14TH - 18TH, 1983

ST. JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK

PREFACE

The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association is a national organization representing interest involved in the promotion of quality parks and recreation throughout Canada. Like most organizations, it has an executive and board of directors that operate throughout the year and deal with issues as they arise. The annual conference rotates around the country from province to province and meets once a year to conduct its business and deal with current issues in workshops and general sessions.

ASSOCIATION BUSINESS

The administration election of officers and annual report is probably an area that may not be of too much interest to the elected members. So for purposes of brevity I will not comment on the details or outcomes of this aspect of the convention, however, the information is available upon request from Mr.Schatz.

OPENING ADDRESS

LAURIE SKRESLET, 1983 Mount Everest Climber, First Canadian to the Summit, Free-lance Guide and Mountain Instructor.

Without a doubt the highlight of the conference for me came at the opening address. Mr. Skreslet gave what I considered to be one of the most moving speeches that I have been privileged to hear. The address was not one of great oratory or fire and brimstone, but rather a sincere, honest, feeling speech which gripped the emotions of

those present. He received two standing ovations throughout his speech. Mr. Skreslet graphically described the inner feelings and emotions of planning and preparing for the ascent of Mount Everest, the loss of the lives of some of his friends, the physical and mental endurance necessary to meet the challenge of climbing Mount Everest and the dedication and camaraderie among the mountain climbing team. Anyone present was made to feel through his words that they were actually experiencing the climb themselves. Part way through his address, a short but powerful film on the expedition was shown. Laurie concluded his address with a very emotional summary which for all Canadians could only be described as inspirational.

HOME GROUP SESSIONS

A rather innovative part of the conference was workshops known as Home Group Sessions. All delegates were assigned a Home Group where they would attend throughout the convention. The Home Group concept was to allow delegates to discuss amongst themselves any particular topic that they may wish to explore and exchange points of view and opinions. Rather than to outline all of the discussions that took place I will just indicate in point form the issues that were raised and discussed.

- funding of facilities through lotteries
- capital cost sharing of facilities
- user fees
- use of alcohol in recreational facilities

- use of video machines as a source of revenue

- the question of tendering out or operating your own concessions

- master planning

- citizen input and consultation on major recreational facilities

WORKSHOPS

I had the opportunity to attend various workshops throughout the convention. My only regret is not being able to attend more of the workshops as there were certainly plenty that one could choose from. In actual number, there were 39 possibilities.

WORKSHOP ON VANDALISM

This workshop was not unlike several workshops that I have had the opportunity to attend in the past regarding this question of vandalism. Vandalism as a crime was defined and categorized. The various penalties for vandalism were explained as they are provided in the pertinent sections of the Criminal Code. One theme that came out of the workshop is that education is a key to prevention. The various safeguards that one might implement to protect against vandalism were outlined. These include the following:

- natural surveillance

- target hardening
- access control
- territorial control
- defensible space
- activity program supports

The one new program that was outlined related to a community committee that has been established in the county of Brant. This community committee is composed of representatives from the School Boards, the Home and School Association, four citizens elected at large, the Chamber of Commerce, the Parks and Recreation Department and one student representative. This community committee receives, reviews and recommends programs and methods to reduce and control vandalism throughout the county. The Police Department act as advisors or resource to the committee and the County have employed a full-time program co-ordinator to implement recommendations. Unfortunately, I did not determine who pays the program co-ordinator's wages.

MIND OVER MATTER

This workshop was conducted by a professor of psychology, Mr. Brian Kinsley. This workshop was more of a free flowing discussion about leisure and the different

approaches to recreation. We discussed the obligatory activities such as work, family, community and social interaction, and whether or not these activities can be described as leisure. Many of the participants expressed their personal opinions and experiences. The workshop did not end with a specific conclusion but certainly did produce a lively and interesting exchange among people with varying viewpoints across Canada.

QUALITY PARK AND PLAY SPACES IN HIGH DENSITY AREAS

This workshop was again rather unique in that the presentation consisted of almost entirely a duo slide presentation of park site developments in high density areas. To appreciate the elements of the workshop one would obviously have had to be present as it was a visual experience. One component of the presentation consisted of a specific case study on a project called "Park Site 19" in Vancouver. The retention and incorporation of many fine old buildings of architectural quality and significance were preserved as much as possible and incorporated into the park development scheme. This unique project seems to be meeting with a fair amount of public support because of the involvement of surrounding and interested residents.

TURF MANAGEMENT

I selected this workshop because of the committee's recent discussion regarding playing fields (particularly soccer) throughout the City in the hopes of better understanding how fields are built, maintained and re-built. I was expecting a highly technical and boring workshop but was extremely pleasantly surprised with the manner of presentation by Dr. Jack Eggens. Dr. Eggens' presentation was superb and very relative

to our situation. He graphically described through words and slides the various characteristics, growth and resistent qualities of different types of grasses. He clearly explained the different types of aeration, fertilization and field maintenance methods. Any technical person or layman would have enjoyed his presentation immensely, in part due to his theatrical manner of presentation.

THE CANADA FITNESS SURVEY

This survey was conducted by the federal government to determine recreational activity of Canadians. Some interesting information was obtained through the survey. For example, the terms of the survey may not have been totally reflective of the fitness of Canadians as it measured recreational activity as opposed to physical fitness. The survey determined that white collar workers participated more in recreational activities than blue collar workers. This certainly could be misleading as far as physical fitness is concerned because many blue collar workers may expend considerably more physical energy during the day and consequently benefit to a greater degree than many white collar workers. In this respect, the survey may have been misleading. Some of the reasons given for people not becoming involved in physical recreation are:

- lack of time;
- too lazy;
- no one to participate with;
- a perception of lack of facilities;

- health problems.

Various recommendations were provided to overcome these barriers.

GENERAL SESSIONS

QUALITY OF LIFE

Mr. Jim Lotz, a professional writer and community development consultant, spoke to the delegates regarding the question of how communities can deal with the impact of change on the quality of life. Something that Mr. Lotz said registered indelibly in my mind. He said "If you're looking at life as a series of problems to be solved then you have a problem. However, if you look at life as something to experience you will enjoy life better. One should look at life as a mystery because that is exactly what it is." He said Canadians too often act life beggars at the banquet table. Canadians, however, are extremely lucky to have so many fine, developed recreational facilities and opportunities both nearby and within reasonable reach. He indicated that the quality of life is not clear. You cannot always measure it. Although there are some urban indicators, for example: social development; juvenile delinquency; crime; missing persons; illegitimate births; educational achievements; suicide rates; library use and social opportunity, there are several other indicators that one might assess, but it often becomes very confusing. He indicated that one of the basic problems with people is understanding other people. The lack of communication is clear. This comes about because each one of us thinks we are intelligent when in fact we are all too stupid. He suggested that we stop paying so much attention to government and politicians as they too often confuse the issues. The

reason this occurs is because they, the politicians, are too confused and are getting far too many messages from different sectors of society to clearly understand the problems. Mr. Lotz had several other bits of advice to offer and stimulate thought-provoking concepts.

THE FUTURE OF RECREATION

Mr. Marc Zwelling, a consultant in public interest and education. Mr. Zwelling's presentation consisted mainly of statistical data outlining demographic trends. He actually outlined in statistical form what most of us probably already know. For example:

- more people are watching television for longer periods;
- more people are using drugs, both prescribed and non-prescribed;
- there is a higher divorce rate;
- there is a declining fertility rate;
- generally, people are higher educated;
- more women are career-oriented rather than family-oriented;
- there is higher unemployment and more available time for people.

All of these factors and many others point to a change in values and greater interest in physical fitness. He indicated that we are likely running out of children and recreation of the future would be geared to more adult participation, women participation, and seniors, and should be low cost, flexible and close to home.

RECREATION AND COMPUTERS

This session was conducted entirely in French by Mr. Bertrand Meunier, Assistant Director of the Department of Recreation, Glouchester, Ontario. Head sets were provided for those who could not understand French.

Mr. Meunier talked about the wide use of computers in today's society. He indicated that computers are just another instrument to be used in order to assist people in their daily lives, but will certainly not solve all of society's problems. The computers should only be used if it can be proven that they are cost effective and assist a recreationist in becoming more effective in the delivery of programs. From a recreation director's point of view, computers can assist greatly in the control of budgets, scheduling of events, accounts details, memberships, leasing of facilities, use of facilities, bookings of reservations, etc., etc.

At the end of this report I was going to recommend that we study the benefits and cost savings of implementing computer systems for the Recreation Department. However, in discussion with Miss Schimmel, she indicates that this matter is currently under review and reports on this matter will be forthcoming to the Committee at the appropriate time.

CHANGING TIMES

This general session was most interesting and stimulating. It was a role-playing exercise conducted by the Elmira Mental Health Players. The role-playing consisted of four skits on different topics, being:

- an unemployed husband and working wife;
- a sister with a retarded brother;
- a single parent;
- a discharged psychiatric patient.

All the cliches and prejudices that are evident in our society with people in these situations were clearly demonstrated and acted out in the skits. The audience was encouraged to participate and dialogue with the actors and the gruff and pointed discussions that took place pulled the audience into full participation with the actors. The exercise was worthwhile in highlighting the understanding of people with certain problems and barriers to overcome.

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

The organizers of the conference arranged several social functions and events for both the delegates and their guests to attend. The warm hospitality of the City of St.

John was clearly evident. It was obvious that they wanted people to feel comfortable and welcome in their community.

The downtown redevelopment and harbourfront projects have brought to this city new life and excitement. It is obvious that the people of St. John take a great deal of pride in their achievements over the last few years. The City of Hamilton could learn and benefit from the harbourfront development and perhaps incorporate some of their ideas when we develop our harbourfront.

The City of Kitchener arranged an Oktoberfest event with the same flair and excitement we all know that takes place in Kitchener. The City of Kitchener will be the host municipality for the C.P.R.A. Conference next year and therefore went to great lengths in St. John to demonstrate the hospitality that the delegates may anticipate.

It is to be noted that the City Council of St. John placed in their budget $12,000 to accommodate this conference.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. That the Recreation Director research the anti-vandalism program presently in effect in the County of Brant with explicit detail on the role, function and activities of their full-time program co-ordinator and how he relates to the community committee, with a view to establishing a similar program in the City of Hamilton.

II. That Professor Jack Eggens, Associate Professor of the Department of

Horticultural Science, Guelph University, be requested to make a presentation on the subject of turf management - playgrounds and playing fields. That this presentation be arranged at an informal setting (not a formal committee meeting) with members of the Parks and Recreation Committee and members of the Parks staff.

III. That the following resolution be submitted to City Council:

WHEREAS the City of Hamilton has been a long-standing member of the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association; and

WHEREAS the C.P.R.A. Annual Conference is held in various communities across Canada; and

WHEREAS the C.P.R.A. has never held one of their annual conferences in the City of Hamilton;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council directs the Mayor to write the Executive Board of C.P.R.A. and extend a warm invitation to consider holding the 1987 annual conference in the City of Hamilton.

NOTE:For the information of the Members of the Parks and Recreation Committee and Council: the 1984 convention is scheduled for Kitchener, Ontario; the 1985 convention is scheduled for Edmonton, Alberta; 1986 convention is scheduled for Montreal, Quebec; 1987 is open; 1988 is open; 1989, Vancouver is requesting consideraton.

This bid, if approved, follows with it a commitment to certain financial sponsorship which can be clarified through discussions with the C.P.R.A. Executive.

IV. Should recommendation III be accepted, it is being further recommended because of the nearby location of the 1984 convention that the Parks and Recreation Committee consider sending extra politicians and staff to gain experience regarding the organizing and functions that take place at the Kitchener convention.

CONCLUSION

The convention was in my opinion a worthwhile exercise. My only regret is that I could not have attended more of the workshops that were running simultaneously. Several contacts were made with the executive regarding the convention for Hamilton and the resolution and letter route was the method generally employed. I left two kits regarding the Convention Centre and our facilities for their perusal and it was suggested that when the formal bid is made that twenty kits be sent to the executive of C.P.R.A.

In discussing this matter with various delegates, I had the opportunity to talk with Councillor Larry DiIanni from Stoney Creek who informally expressed his willingness to work on a Festitalia theme for any bid that Hamilton might pursue for the convention.

You will also find attached to this report three news articles that appeared in the local New Brunswick paper.

APPRECIATION

I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to the Parks and Recreation Committee for recommending my attendance to this conference and to those other Members of Council who supported my attendance. Various conference material is available by contacting me.

Canadian Plans Second Assault On Mt. Everest

Aug 16/83

By DERWIN GOWAN
Staff Writer

Laurie Skreslet of Calgary, the first Canadian to reach the peak of Mount Everest, says he has a lot of other mountains to climb, and even plans another attempt on the world's tallest mountain itself, this time from the Chinese side and without oxygen tanks.

Mr. Skreslet told Monday's session of the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, which is holding its annual meeting in Saint John, that the first Canadian venture up Mount Everest was a worthwhile venture even if four men died in the attempt.

"I feel there was something very valuable that happened on Mount Everest last year that you can all take advantage of," he said. "The reason I made it to Mount Everest is because I was willing on a daily basis to give it all that I had."

Mr. Skreslet said he learned he was able to face challenges and overcome problems, and the same approach works when facing challenges at lower altitudes.

"Climbing didn't allow me to get out of it," he said, "...and after it you were suprised at what you just did."

"I'm not here to say, 'Look at me, I'm a hero;' I'm here for something much more valuable than that," he said. "I hope that people will look back on our trip as something inspirational."

He said the members of the expedition had to use their determinatiuon to carry their project through in the five years of fund-raising before they got to the foot of the mountain, and had to use it again when some of their number were killed and others decided to quit, which forced them to alter their original route.

Mr. Skreslet, who is in his mid-thirties, does not consider himself an exceptional athlete nor the best climber in Canada. He admitted to both smoking and drinking. "I happen to be an active participant in climbing and every now and then I can excel," he said.

He said the climbers tackled problems as they came on the mountain, like the time they found out their radio batteries were dead. "They made a big thing out of it back in Canada," he said. "It was a little less dramatic on the mountain."

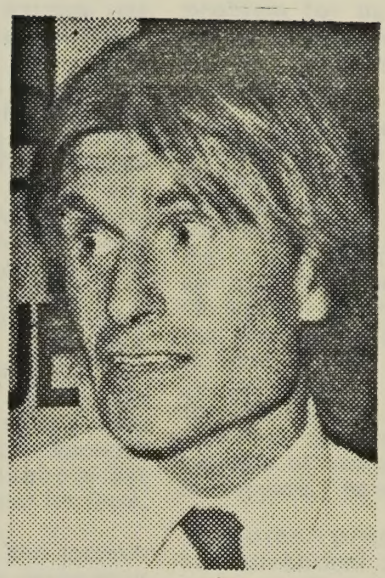
"It was a matter of getting up in the morning, and going click, click — it doesn't work — then throw it in the tent and keep on going."

Mr. Skreslet said later at a news conference he was headed for India for an internatiuonal conference on Himalayan mountaineering. After that he plans to visit some mountain climbing regions in northern India.

He hopes to climb Mount Everest again in 1986, this time from the Chinese side. That route is more difficult climbing, he says, but there is less danger from avalanches.

The 1982 expedition went from Nepal, using the route used by Sir Edmund Hilary in the first successful climb up the mountain in 1953. "I know that this time I gained a lot more respect for the original assent in 1953," Mr. Skreslet said.

Two Nepalese Sherpas accompanied Mr. Skreselt on the final five and one-quarter hour climb to the top last Oct. 5, including 26-year-old Sundare Sherpa who was making his third trip to the top. One of Mr. Skreslet's companions and two more Sherpas went up two days later.



SKRESLET

"There are always going to be more difficult mountains to climb," he said. "There are many more mountains that are still challenging." He told reporters that there is a mountain in the Patagonian region of South America he would like to try some day.

He guides mountain-climbing expeditions for a living, but says he has not made enough money to pay income taxes in the last couple of years.

He said mountain climbers have to tread a fine line between "challenge and insanity," recognizing when an attempt is suicidal.

He said an American expedition has already went up the Chinese route without oxygen, but he also said, "You find bodies every way you go when you climb the mountain." Mr. Skreslet himself found the body of a woman missing for two years.

Even though he has joined a very select company who has made it to the top, he says he has mountaineering in his blood, and has spent the last couple of weeks climbing in western Canada, away from the round of public relations functions connected with the Mount Everest climb. "I've been climbing for two weeks and it's just like being reborn again," he said.

Says Community Must Curb Vandals

Police forces are not enough to curb vandalism, says the program co-ordinator of an Ontario anti-vandalism group.

Vandalism, with an annual price tag in Canada of more than $100 million, starts in the community, and this is where it should be headed off, says Chet Cowie, who heads the workings of the Brant County Anti-Vandalism Committee in Brantford, Ont.

"By going to the community you can curb the problem before it gets to the police," he said. "A lot of police forces are going to crime prevention, but when you consider the costs involved of police officers working strictly on crime prevention, community based schemes such as ours are the only answer to the problem, working very closely and under the direction of police departments."

Mr. Cowie was in Saint John yesterday for the first day of the Canadian Recreation and Parks Association annual convention. The four-day meeting at the Saint John Trade and Convention Centre has drawn more than 500 public recreation workers from across Canada, including approximately 120 delegates who serve as elected members of municipal councils or recreation boards.

In a workshop yesterday afternoon, Mr. Cowie described his committee to approximately 30 recreation people who listened to the group's triumphs and failures in the hope of taking home ideas for controlling wilful damage.

Vandals and burglars stay away from communities that display the warning sign of "Neighborhood Watch," one of the programs introduced by Brantford by the vandalism committee, he said. The deterrant effect is spread over both private property and whatever schools and playgrounds are in the area, he said.

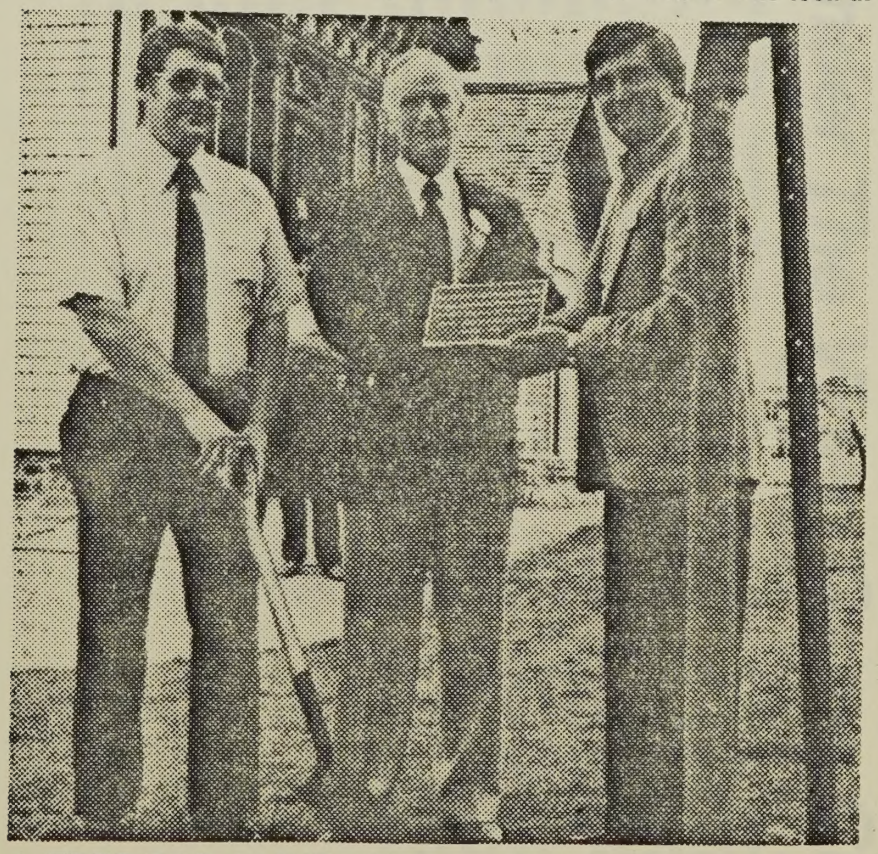
In addition to learning how to burglar-proof their homes, participants receive the secure feeling that comes from knowing their neighbors are watching out for them, he said.

Among the committee's other programs is Teens On Patrol, in which young people are used as a liaison between parks officials and trouble makers, "explaining the rules" to visitors who look as if they may cause problems. "They tell them, 'If you don't cause a problem for us, the parks people won't cause a problem for you," he said.

Mr. Cowie said the patrols, funded through federal and provincial grants, were tried out in 1980 when one Brantford park encountered so much damage in one month that the city was going to close it down. "We put our patrols in there for the summer, and there was not one occurrence of vandalism in that park," he said.

Another program has established mini-courses for local schools, enabling students to study the causes and effects of vandalism, as well as possible solutions.

Although funded through provincial and federal grants, most of the programs begun by the Brant County group are designed to be taken over by other agencies when the money runs out.



TREE FOR SAINT JOHN — The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, which is holding its 1983 annual meeting in Saint John, donated a tree to the city to mark the occasion. Shown here at its planting in front of Barbour's General Store are, left to right, Jay Kivell of the Ontario Parks Association, Saint John Recreation and Parks Director C. E. (Nick) Nicolle and association president Donald MacAulay from Saskatchewan. The tree is a "little leaf linden," commonly called a bass wood.

Aug. 16/83

Recreation Officials Ponder The Video Game Craze

Recreation directors across Canada are uncertain what to make of the video game craze.

Some say the arcades offer a new form of educational recreation; others say they attract the types who gave pool halls a bad name and can stunt a youngster's social development.

Three speakers said Wednesday at the annual meeting of the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association at Market Square in Saint John that video games can be a valuable educational and recreational tool — provided the youngsters do not spend too much time at the controls and the games are located in wholesome places.

They said community recreation programs should provide the games so they can be a positive, rather than negative, influence.

The session on video games, featuring A. T. Easley of the University of New Brunswick Forestery Faculty, Harutune Mikaelian who chairs UNB's Psychology Department and George Hamilton, recreation superintendent for the city of Portland, Me., was one of seven workshops dealing with the theme of technology and recreation.

"The next time you want to spark a dinnertime conversation, ask your friends how they feel about video games," Dr. Easley said.

He said there are changes coming on the video arcade scene, first, because the arcade industry is in financial trouble and some arcades face bankruptcy, and second, because there is a "second generation" of games coming along using laser, 3-D and other features to "blow your brains out."

He admitted that a lot of juvenile offences are related to video-arcades "but the rate was just as high before the video-games came to pass."

"They'll be leaner and cleaner and may be more expensive to play and may well become more oriented to family clientele," Dr. Easely predicted of video arcades of the future.

"There is nothing wrong with video arcade games; they are excellent diversions," Dr. Mikaelian said.

But he said too much time at a video aracde can hurt a child since the games go against some of the basic rules of play important to human development.

"The child or the operator has no control over the rules of the game," he said. "These games provide the child with very little options...." unlike normal games children make up on their own.

He said the games are "detrimental to social interaction" when the players stare at the screen for hours without talking to anybody.

Play and games allow children to learn rules, how far rules can be bent, and what to do in unknown situations, without serious consequences, he said.

But the structure of video games makes the results "very predictable," unlike real life or normal game situations, he said. "After all, you know just what Pac Man is going to do.....that's very comforting to know but that's not real life."

Mr. Hamilton said video games "give players an artificial sense of control" and he also dislikes that fact that players have to "destroy" their opponents to win.

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